in a liberalized policy regime, the entrepreneurs are competent to take independent commercial decisions on sourcing either domestic or foreign capital for the industries of petroleum sector.

LPG connection in Uttarakhand

†261. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether he is aware that Government had taken a decision in the past to cover all villages for supply of cooking gas, located within three kilometres distance from motorable roads in Uttarakhand keeping in view environment sensitivity of the State;

(b) whether he is also aware that despite a decision of Government neither new gas connections nor cooking gas to the existing consumers is available; and

(c) if so, the steps being taken by the Ministry to improve the situation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERTROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (c) Government have given freedom to OMCs to set up LPG distributorships in accordance with their commercial assessment and locations are identified by them on the basis of available refill sale potential for sustaining an independent distributorship. However, Government have advised OMCs to draw up Marketing Plan for covering semi-urban and rural areas. OMCs have finalized a common industry Marketing plan covering 841 locations including 6 locations in the State of Uttarakhand for setting up LPG distributorships mainly in rural and urban-rural (semi-urban) locations.

Government is ensuring that adequate quantity of Liquefied Patroleum Gas (LPG) is available in the country LPG supplies to distributors are being made by the Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) through indigenous production and imports in accordance with the genuine demand of customers registered with the LPG distributors. In the current year (April-September, 2007), a total of 27.70 lakhs of new LPG connections and 7.28 lakhs of Double Bottle Connections (DBCs) have been released by the OMCs. The number of domestic LPG customers has increased from 7.72 crores as on 1.4.2004 to 9.43 crores as on 1.4.2007.

OMCs have also reported that at present, there is no overall shortage of LPG in country including the State of Uttarakhand and LPG supplies to distributors are being made by OMCs in accordance with the genuine demand of customers registered with the LPG distributors.

Sale of associated products by LPG distributors

†262. SHRI PYARELAL KHANDELWAL: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATRUAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that all oil companies have directed their respective LPG distributors to sell associated products alongwith LPG to consumers forcefully;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the provisions for taking action against the distributors of these companies?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (c) No, Sir, Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have not directed their respective LPG distributors to sell associated products along with LPG to consumers forcefully. However, in view of safety considerations, customers are encouraged to use LPG tubes which offer improved safety, *viz.*, longer life, fire retardant property,

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

rodent proof wire braiding and ozone resistant layer. OMCs have also tied up with some stove manufacturers for production of "Green Label" stoves, which have higher thermal efficiency and, apart from being economical to the consumers, also help in conseving fuel and protecting the environment. However, a customer is not under any compulsion to purchase the same from the LPG distributors. In fact, customers are at liberty to buy these appliances (meeting BIS specifications) from any source of the choice.

Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) has also reported that in order to enhance customer service and add value to their customers, it has launched an initiative, named "Beyond LPG". Under this initiative, BPCL has entered into arrangements with leading brands for sale of kitchen/household items through their distributors at special prices. There are clear instructions that no customer will be forced to buy any these items.

Poor services by LPG distributors in Balia, U.P.

263. SHRI KAMAL AKHTAR: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that the people in village Narahi in District Balia, Uttar Pradesh are facing problem due to improper supply of gas cylinders;

(b) if so, whether Government would appoint LPG dealer in that area as there is no dealer within the radius of 20 km. except one of Bharat Petroleum;

(c) whether Government have received representations from some Members of Parliament also during December, 2006 to January, 2007, in this regard;

(d) whether Government have replied to the MPs and if so, the details thereof;

(e) the action Government propose to take to appoint dealer in that area in view of huge public demand; and

(f) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL): (a) to (f) At present, there is no overall shortage of LPG in the country including in Narahi, District Balia, Uttar Pradesh and LPG supplies to distributors are being made by the Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) through indigenous production and imports in accordance with the genuine demand of customers registered with the LPG distributors.

OMCs have reported that Narahi is a rural location and LPG requirement of the area (about 700-800 refills per months) is catered to by one LPG distributorship of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited which was commissioned in 2002 at a distance of 6 kms. A feasibility study carried out by OMCs in 2006 revealed that the population of Narahi is 10,700 and the location is not feasible for setting up of an independent distributorship.

Representations have been received from Shri Vijay Krishna, MP (Lok Sabha) and Shri Kamal Akhtar, MP (Rajya Sabha). Replies have been sent to Shri Vijay Krishna and Shri Kamal Akhtar, Hon'ble MPs on 21.3.2007 and 28.06.2007 respectively.

Difficulties faced by tourists in Delhi

264. SHRI JAI PARKASH AGGARWAL: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether middle class tourists are facing difficulties to get economy class residences at places/cities of tourists importance, particularly in Delhi; and